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OUR COUNTRY'S TROUBLES, NO. II.

OR

NATIONAL SINS AND NATIONAL RETRIBUTION.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT,

PHILADELPHIA, JULY 5, 1857.

BY THE

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S E R M O N .



“AT WHAT INSTANT I SHALL SPEAK CONCERNING A NATION, AND CONCERNING A KINGDOM, TO BUILD AND TO PLANT IT; IF IT DO EVIL IN MY SIGHT, THAT IT OBEY NOT MY VOICE, THEN I WILL REPENT OF THE GOOD WHEREWITH I SAID I WOULD BENEFIT THEM.”—*Jer.* xviii. 9, 10.

“THEY HAVE SOWN THE WIND, AND THEY SHALL REAP THE WHIRLWIND.”—*Hos.* viii. 7.

“THE LORD SPAKE THUS TO ME WITH A STRONG HAND, AND INSTRUCTED ME THAT I SHOULD NOT WALK IN THE WAY OF THIS PEOPLE, SAYING, SAY YE NOT, A CONFEDERACY, TO ALL THEM TO WHOM THIS PEOPLE SHALL SAY, A CONFEDERACY; NEITHER FEAR YE THEIR FEAR, NOR BE AFRAID. SANCTIFY THE LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF; AND LET HIM BE YOUR FEAR, AND LET HIM BE YOUR DREAD. AND HE SHALL BE FOR A SANCTUARY; BUT FOR A STONE OF STUMBLING, AND FOR A ROCK OF OFFENCE, TO BOTH THE HOUSES OF ISRAEL, FOR A GIN AND FOR A SNARE TO THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM. AND MANY AMONG THEM SHALL STUMBLE, AND FALL, AND BE BROKEN, AND BE SNARED, AND BE TAKEN. BIND UP THE TESTIMONY, SEAL THE LAW AMONG MY DISCIPLES.”—*Isa.* viii. 11—16.

I HAVE read these three passages of Scripture because together they present a subject whose full scope is reached by neither. They all concern God's providential government over His people Israel as a nation. The first declares God's absolute sovereignty over nations, and the retributive justice with which He will make His purpose and dealings correspondent with their own doings. The second, from Hosea, relates to the sins of the ten tribes of Israel, and declares that, as they had sown, so should they reap; their sin itself becoming the source of chastisement. The third, from Isaiah, ad-

dressed to Judah at a time of great national distress, contains God's pointed rebuke of their policy of deliverance, with an indication of their true refuge and of the duty of His faithful disciples. Taken together, they present us with the subject of God's providential relation to nations, especially in regard to *National sins and their retribution*.

After the very emphatic command to the prophet Isaiah, publicly to oppose and rebuke the iniquitous policy of his countrymen, no apology, I presume, is required from a teacher of religion for directing attention to national sins. Should any be demanded, I have none to offer. *A year ago I felt it necessary to preface an application of religious principle to public policy by an argument for the right and duty of the course. The unseemly interruption which ensued, and the public discussions of the rights and province of the pulpit thereby occasioned, have caused a careful review of the general principle and of the particular discourse. I CANNOT ABATE ONE HAIR'S BREADTH OF THE POSITION THEN ASSUMED.* In full view of its results to myself and others, I can feel nothing but thankfulness for the opportunity of preaching with all boldness what my calmest re-considered judgment pronounces simply the truth of God. The storm of opposition has only given currency to the views of the sermon, and confirmed the freedom of the pulpit in the consciences of thousands of God's ministers and of hundreds of thousands of His people. The public verdict on the case has enfranchised the sacred desk. God grant that those privileged to stand therein may never

shun to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

Without apology, therefore, or defence, I call your attention to the subject which our texts set before us.

I. We will consider, first, the GENERAL PRINCIPLES which they establish. The application of these principles will form the second head of our discourse.

1. These passages of Scripture, then, teach us *God's sovereignty over nations*. By this I mean His absolute power and control over their existence and destiny, and His supreme appointment of all the good or evil which they receive. Their origin and progress, decay and dissolution, and all the fortunes and interests which lie between, depend absolutely upon Him. This was the truth specially impressed upon Jeremiah in the passage quoted from him as a text. "The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there will I cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work upon the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as the potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil,

I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." Humbling enough to human pride may this doctrine be; but it has the sanction of history as well as of inspiration. We look back with pride on the heroism of our national origin, and the splendor of our progress; we speculate on the causes of our growth, and complacently discuss the elements of our character and policy; but we must go higher for the cause of our causes, and the origin of our elements, even to Him who, while He hangeth the earth upon nothing, has "made its round orb so sure that it cannot be moved." It was the eternal purpose of God to raise up a republic for a home of the oppressed, and a source of liberty and religion to the world. And therefore, hath He spoken concerning our nation, "to build and to plant it." But He can as easily speak concerning it, "to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy." And where, then, would be our boasted strength and progress?

2. Again, our texts teach us that God will take note of *national offences*. We are prone enough to forget that God will take note of any iniquities. But there is an indefiniteness in the action of multitudes which increases the tendency. We lose our identity in the crowd, and think lightly of our individual responsibility for what is the action of the whole. Yet God loses not sight of it. He never has forgotten, and never will for-

get, public iniquities. The history of His chosen nation is not peculiar in this respect. It is peculiar only in having the light of inspiration thrown upon this feature for the instruction of mankind. All other nations have been, and will be, dealt with alike. No matter how high their privileges, or how glorious their progress, be sure their sin will find them out. God's book of remembrance will be a swift witness against them. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."

3. Another principle here declared is, that God's dealings with nations involve a *present retribution*. Individual responsibility for public action will come out to light at a future tribunal; and eternity will bear witness to the omniscient justice wherewith each participator in the sin shall receive his reward. To that tribunal let all the nation, high and low, leaders and led, deceivers and deceived, solemnly look forward. For "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

But, besides this individual and eternal retribution of all joint sins, there is also a present and national one. God's justice is complete. And, therefore, those aggregations of men which will not survive the present world are dealt with in it. Whether it be a nation, or a community, or corporation, God will administer justice before its dissolution, and make manifest even here that,

“though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.” The present retribution is a corporate one ; that is, it overtakes the guilty in the peculiar relation wherein they were associated in their crime. And coming thus, it holds the whole relationship to account. Whether it be institution, community, or nation, it suffers penalty as such ; and, therefore, the innocent suffer with the guilty. The body corporate suffers, and all its parts must sympathize. When ruin follows public fraud, or war or pestilence scourges a guilty nation, there is no discrimination among the members. The joint relationship implicates in the corporate act even the ignorant and the protesting ; and for the corporate act they must corporately suffer. Beyond this, the account will be made straight at the day of judgment. In this world, I said, they must corporately suffer. And yet, in truth, the suffering even here is individual ; for it is still in individual feeling and interest, though by means of a corporate relationship. A nation is but an aggregate of individuals ; its welfare, of individual welfares ; its misery, of individual miseries. When it sins, it is the sin of individuals ; either of a majority, or of the whole through their representatives. When it is chastised, the blow, wherever and whatsoever, must fall on individual homes and hearts. A besieged city refuses to capitulate. Famine and pillage make no discrimination in their victims. And thus in God’s retribution of nations, we see the strange spectacle of unwilling and protesting privates overwhelmed in ruin, while guilty leaders make their escape ; or we see another generation made to suf-

fer for the sins of their fathers. Seem the scales unbalanced? They will be equalized hereafter. The design, meanwhile, is to deepen the concern of the good for public action, by the knowledge that they must share its results. Otherwise, they might yield to disgust at collision with the bad, and, assured of their own escape, leave the community to itself.

Thus does God hold communities to a present retribution. The eternal principle of His rule of nations is, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

4. Another principle here taught is, that in this retribution, the *sin itself sows the seed of punishment*. "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." The process of sowing and reaping in the moral world is unceasing. It is the grand principle of God's retributive government. We see it every day in the development of individual character, and the influence, through social relations, of past action on present condition. Visibly, "whatsoever a man soweth, that doth he also reap!" And we are divinely assured that the process which we see continuing down to the very close of life is uninterrupted by death, and increases with eternity. "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; and he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." The same process, on a wider scale, is carried on in the moral government of nations. Public virtue results in kindred prosperity. And nations that have sown the wind, reap the whirlwind. The fundamental reason in all these cases, is the

same. Sin is the great disorganizer. It violates the law of God—everywhere the condition of welfare; and throws open the door for the misery which God's law would have prevented. Whether it breeds disease and anguish in the human body, drops into the soul the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, tears out the heart of domestic bliss, or sweeps over society with the whirlwind of lust, and crime, and anarchy, the principle is one and the same. God has thus put a brand on sin that men may know it. Nowhere can it be harmless. Nowhere sigh with such a zephyr softness over beds of wild flowers, that it will not return in the whirlwind to uproot the trees it was allowed to kiss. No crevice is too small for it to enter; no structure too massive for it to overthrow. No "agreement with hell" can restrain it; and no "confederacy" of sinners can keep it back. Every page of history is full of the records of its insidious approaches, its final and ruthless desolations. Nations great and strong have gone down into the deep with the millstone of their own iniquities about their necks. Goodly temples of liberty have crumbled and sunk in the swollen sins of the votaries they protected. Nor is there aught in our own too glorious and strong to be dismantled by the whirlwind, if by transient gain or pleasure we are wooed to sow the wind.

5. Another principle involved is the *efficacy of national repentance*. Nowhere in this world is sin an irremediable evil. Such efficacy hath that remedy of an atoning Saviour which God himself hath provided.

On the infinite redemption effected by His cross all probation, individual, and national, is founded. Without this ransom, efficacious even in promise, blank desolation had for the first sin swept the earth. But He who in the hour of "man's first disobedience" said, "Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom," has by every sinner's side been ever since saying the same. And through His precious bloodshedding are "repentance and remission of sins" still proclaimed in this guilty world. For His sake doth God accept the prayer of the penitent, and turn away His anger from those who for their iniquities deserve to be punished. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if the nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

6. Still another lesson here taught is the *influence and work of the Lord's disciples* in respect to national transgressions, and *especially of his messengers, the prophets*. We have already seen how the retributions of Providence for national sins involve "the precious" with "the vile." We have seen, also, that the design is to nerve the servants of God to earnest and persistent efforts for national reform. God will not allow them to separate themselves from the community, if they would. For after having staked out the path of duty by precepts, He has hedged it up with the thorns of a common retribution. What is this line of duty?

Distinct and avowed separation from every unrighteous public policy. “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom (or in all those things in which) this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.” This referred to the confederacy of Syria and Ephraim—one part of Israel, against Judah—the other part; of which confederacy were treacherous partisans in Judah itself, weakening the people by enlarging on the dangers of resistance. Unrighteous public policy is always “a confederacy,”—a confederacy between diverse principles and interests, engineered by unscrupulous men on the basis of selfish fear. There is no unity among wicked men. They can work together only under outward pressure. Their only scheme of public policy is “a confederacy” which shall bribe some, and bully others into some temporary expedient against immediate defeat—a confederacy without coherence, and falling to pieces when it can no longer be bullied by “chimeras dire,” or bribed with loaves and fishes. Against every such “confederacy,” sacrificing truth and right for supposed expediency, God’s people must take open stand.

They are also to *come boldly out for the right assailed*. “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary.” The treacherous confederates of Judah had no faith in the providence of God, and counselled the quieting of Ephraim by inglorious submission. Base souls were they who would rather purchase personal ease or profit by succumbing to wrong, than

venture a conflict with "the two tails of those smoking fire-brands," even though the God of Israel was their helper. Hence the command, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself;" honor God by obedience and dependence. "Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." "Fear not them who can kill the body, but after that have no more than they can do; but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Be as much controlled by the fear of God in public as in private concerns. "And he shall be for a sanctuary." You shall find him an all-sufficient refuge, whatever the threatened danger. That is, God's people are to adhere simply to Him in every complication, and against all odds. There are no emergencies which render right wrong, or wrong right. There is no expediency which can justify departure from principle. There is no complication of dangers which can render it unsafe to do right. Syria may be confederate with Ephraim—foreign invasion with sectional apostasy: and Judah, through timidity and treachery in her own children, may be brought very low: but the cause of Judah is the cause of God, and therefore the "Lord of hosts himself" "shall be for a sanctuary," if He be sanctified among His disciples.

Preëminent among God's people stood the *prophet*. His was a special work in the conflict of principle. He says, "The Lord spake to me with a strong hand" (this refers to a special and unusually strong pressure of the prophetic inspiration, impelling him to prophesy,) "and instructed me that I should not walk in the way

of this people, saying, say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." It was made his special and imperative duty to prophesy against the policy of his countrymen. All alone might he stand in lifting up his voice for truth. Threatening combinations might forbid his message. "A confederacy" might be formed to thrust him out of Jerusalem, and punish his presumption. Yet he must lift up his voice, and spare not, and cry aloud for truth, and righteousness, and God; and most of all, denounce the temporizing expediency which would surrender principle to escape conflict. If the people would hear him, well. If otherwise, he must not blench at popular disfavor, nor speak with bated breath, but testify still to such servants of the Lord as would give heed. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." They might be a mere handful; but the hollow of an Almighty hand inclosed them. The same Saviour God would be "a sanctuary" to them and "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel" (aggressive Ephraim and succumbing Judah,) and "a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (the time-serving populace of their metropolitan city.) "And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." Thus at last "wickedness should be broken as a tree."

We have thus considered the general principles respecting national sins, retribution, and duty, which are contained in our text.

II. It now remains for us, secondly, to APPLY THESE PRINCIPLES TO OURSELVES. Are there no public wrongs to make us fear the just judgment of God? Are there no signs that God is repenting of the good wherewith He said He would benefit us? Are there no indications that we have "sown the wind, and are beginning to reap the whirlwind?" Are there no policies sacrificing righteousness to a visionary expediency which require the prophets of the Lord to cry out against that to which the people are saying, "A Confederacy?" He reads not the signs of the times as I, who denies it. Others must judge of their duty for themselves. To their own master they stand or fall. But in the convictions of my own conscience, "the Lord hath spoken unto me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people;" and with whatever imaginations others may terrify themselves from open rebuke of wrong, "neither to fear their fear, nor be afraid." I have no other purpose than to "sanctify the Lord of hosts himself;" "and He shall be for a sanctuary," though foes may threaten, and friends depart.

How have we sinned? What signs of retribution? Where have we sown the wind? And where lowers the resulting whirlwind?

1. We have sown the wind of *financial recklessness*, and may reap the whirlwind of *financial ruin*.

Two things have marked the social and commercial spirit of the day. One is universal haste to be rich, stimulating wildest speculation. Men are no more con-

tented with the legitimate avails of labor. Prosperity has turned the head with visions of sudden wealth. Success of a few has blinded the many, until they rush headlong into hair-brained speculation. Men forsake their accustomed callings, and draw out their capital from tried investments, impatient of slow and safe returns. Mechanics drop their tools, farmers sell their land, gentlemen and maid-servants draw out their savings, and launch upon the rapids of commercial hazard, following with eager prow, midst sunken rocks, the trained and cunning gamblers who lure them on to ruin. No journal of the day records how many go down in total wreck; but every accidental prize is trumpeted from Dan to Beersheba, to stimulate unholy greed. It began with the accession of California, and has received fresh impetus by every opening of western lands. Men have bought and sold, and reduplicated on town lots existing only on paper, and farm lands under water. Trade has overbid production, until the sinews of progress are weakened, and the ratio of produce to population declines amidst inflation of paper fortunes. Inordinate, impatient, self-defeating haste to be rich, is now the marked feature of our people.

With this has naturally gone a second trait—profuse and reckless extravagance. “Light come, light go,” is the old proverb. Spendthrift wasting follows toilless gain. Vanity and ambition keep up their vulgar rivalry. Desperate commercial gamblers build splendid palaces to swell an inflated credit; and envious wives and daughters, with the cry of the horse-leech,

goad harassed husbands to more reckless ventures. All classes rush into debt, spend before they make, mortgage crops unsown, and stimulate the excessive imports which stop the waterwheels of forge and loom, and send abroad the money which should feed the workmen. The South runs in debt to the North, the West to the East, the country to the town, the nation to Europe.

Thus have we "sown the wind." And sagacious eyes discern the "whirlwind." Confidence is shaken; money rates increase; reputed fortunes collapse under the pressure; and the bounty of a forgotten God in unwonted harvests is the declared sole hope of weathering the crisis. Retrenchment and patient industry have become, more than ever, Christian duties. Extravagance and speculation have grown to crimes which must not go unchallenged of the pulpit.

2. We "have sown the wind" of *party spirit*, and are beginning to reap the whirlwind of *public demoralization and anarchy*.

Political faction is the bane of a republic. Men learn to value name and power more than truth and principle. Parties cease to be embodiments of diverse principles, working out governmental harmony from opposing forces, and become mere confederacies for success. Party triumph becomes the mainspring of political action to the multitude; and unscrupulous demagogues engineer a "confederacy" upon the principles of arithmetic. The result is a constant pandering to evil cliques, for the sake of political support. The better class are apathetic; the worse, exacting. Rulers

dare not enforce law at the cost of popularity; and the ramifications of public office are prostituted into political machinery. The process goes on from year to year, from bad to worse. No party dares honesty at the risk of defeat. And good citizens complain of the wrong on the streets, and indorse it at the polls. Thus have we "sown the wind" of party-worship.

And we are fast "reaping the whirlwind" of public demoralization and anarchy. We are fast coming to this—that no laws can be enforced against any class whose numbers and coherence give power at the polls. Look at New York, with its city government in league with thieves, and publicans, and prostitutes, and wielding its immense expenditures of public money for political bribery and private speculation, while crime stalks unabashed along the streets. Look at California, so ridden and robbed by political sharpers and bullies, that a Vigilance Committee and Lynch Law became the only remedy of virtue against the tyranny of vice. Look at our own city. See our license laws set at naught, and dramshops steaming out their hell-fire on the Sabbath-day, because no administration holds its popularity so cheap as to attempt correction. See our fire department given up to rowdyism and inefficiency, while other cities, by horse-draught and steam-pumps, have rendered fires noiseless, and conflagrations impossible; because the votes of the bruisers, usurping its control, are too important to be lost. See that infamous villain, who has violated our neutrality laws, desolated a sister republic with war and rapine, and

deceived, oppressed, murdered thousands of his own countrymen inveigled into his grasp, covering up his incompetence and cowardice by ostentatious travel and receptions, like a returning patriot, and going unwhipped of justice, because men in power think his crime too strong in sectional approval to be safely challenged. Look at equal enormities still justified and upheld in Kansas by the supreme power of the land, while packed juries say of diaabolic murder, "Not guilty;" and collusive judges are retained upon the judgment-seat. Why? Because men in high position have any sympathy with bloodshed? No; but because the partisans to whom they have said, "A confederacy," will not allow retreat. God forbid that the prophets should cease to cry against a policy which, by confederating foreign license with sectional fanaticism, is resolved to rule or ruin.

3. We have "sown the wind" by *temporizing with wrong for supposed expediency*, and we are "reaping the whirlwind" in the *aggravation of the wrong itself and the very dangers whence we sought escape*.

It has been thus with the spirit of aggression on neighboring States. Public honor and public interest required it to be nipped in the bud. The first fillibustering crew should have been made to expiate their crime by the fullest rigor of the law. Fear of sectional offence induced a temporizing policy. They were allowed to slip through the fingers of the law, and on defeat, delivered by national entreaty. We "sowed the

wind" in Cuba, and behold we are "reaping the whirlwind" in Central America!

It has been thus with the adulterous and Ishmaelitic crew of Mormons. Their debaucheries and villany should have been snuffed out at once by a virtuous government. A virtuous people should have risen in majesty, and required it of their rulers. Instead of this, we temporized with the wrong. We suffered them to grow unchecked, to settle afar from oversight, and work out their abominations in the heart of a wilderness. Collisions and robbery went unrebuked. Insult and defiance of federal authority met concession instead of punishment. Their arch-traitor was appointed Governor. The husband of a dozen wives sat unrebuked in Congress. And behold! we are now boldly defied, and implacable hostility to Gentiles is openly proclaimed and practised. Bloodshed is fast becoming the only remedy. Yet the merciful promptitude which might still prevent it is still wanting. The army which should bring them to their senses, beleaguers and threatens a peaceful town for party capital; while demagogues on stump and paper are feeling the public conscience with the mischievous assertion that the "religious usage" of adultery is beyond federal control. We have "sown the wind" in Nauvoo and Missouri, and we are beginning to "reap the whirlwind" in Utah.

It has been thus with slavery. It was introduced into the country against the will of the colonists. In the inauguration of our blood-bought liberties, it was confessed a sad anomaly and shame, as well as a national

disaster. The author of the Declaration of Independence felt its inconsistency with the charter of human rights, and spoke as no southern man now dares to speak. The "Father of his Country" deplored its existence, and labored for its removal. But fierce remonstrance came from interested men, and union of all the colonies on the basis of manumission could not be had. Principle and expediency were in collision. Would to God our fathers had possessed the faith in Him to act out conviction, and eschew "a confederacy" at cost of principle. Union might have been delayed, but when attained, would have thrown no apple of discord among the sister States. God would have defended the right, and posterity would have escaped the reaping of the whirlwind. But they stood the shock of battles, to be dismayed by the chimera of domestic discord. After daring death for asserted right, they were misled by a supposed expediency to temporize with acknowledged wrong. With the so common error that evil will wear out itself, for which this case afforded more than common ground of hope, they bequeathed to future generations the task of righting the oppressed. Misfounded hope, that the devil will hang himself, if given rope! No temporizing with a wrong can stand. It roots itself the deeper in corrupt humanity, and demands more room. Collision constantly ensues at every point of its widening circumference. Wrong, grown haughty by indulgence, more imperiously demands concession; and conscience, weakened by compromise, yields more cravenly than ever. It was so here. Slavery, under death-sentence by the

Declaration of Independence and public sentiment of a young republic, begged and blustered for reprieve. It would be shrived before its execution. Emboldened by its quick success, it demanded nourishment for twenty years by man-stealing. Weakened by their first concession, the blood-stained champions of freedom yielded this. With evasive phrase, dictated by secret shame, they enacted bondage to the slave, and furlough to the slave trade. Expediency triumphed over principle. And now mark the consequence. Not one hundred years have gone by since that first concession; yet under the pressure of that first wrong step, we have for transient peace successively conceded to that growing wrong, the fertile fields of Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri. We have conceded Texas. We have conceded liberty to hunt and kidnap men over all free soil. We have conceded abrogation of the law protecting any portion of our territory from the curse of bondage. We have stolen two generations of innocent and helpless children, besides the one our fathers kidnapped on the coast of Africa, and ten in the place of every one. Yet the difficulty has not abated. We have now to deal with the problem of four millions of slaves instead of four hundred thousand. Instead of shame-faced apologies for an inherited and involuntary evil, we have to deal with a new-fangled theology, begotten by interest, which justifies slavery by Divine Revelation, and a new-fangled jurisprudence, instilled by political ambition, which crushes all men in colored skin into constitutional non-

entity. And fiercer threatenings of disunion and civil war than ever frightened our forefathers encounter the refusal of permission to tyrannize at will in Kansas, the resentment of the decision which is paving the way for transporting slaves into sovereign States against their will, and the permission of free speech on free soil to those who in God's name rebuke the "confederacy" which is working all these abominations. The press, the pulpit, Christian missions, and Christian publication societies, are all challenged to submit, and the Church of God is riven asunder to silence its witness against the direst of wrongs. Verily, our fathers "sowed the wind" in the tremors of national weakness, and we, their descendants, in the day of national vigor, are compelled to "reap the whirlwind." Who can foresee the end? Or how can we put limits to the swelling evil, save through the teaching of the prophet? "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary." The only way to repair a wrong is to cease from it. And however a foreign Syria may confederate with a sectional Ephraim, to subjugate divided Judah, let us hear the word of God, and keep it.

Such are some of the manifestations of God's retributive justice at work among ourselves. Such are the circumstances in which we are called to apply the principles inculcated in our text. Let the application

begin with us, and here. National though be the sin and retribution, we have already seen how it operates through individuals. Though national must be repentance and reform, they must be wrought in individual minds, and begin at the house of God. The prophet must sound the alarm, and the people of the living God follow his instruction. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples."





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